

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus for personalized time-shifted programming. Digital content is retrieved, for example, from a digital library. Once retrieved, the content is stored locally, for example, on a personal computer. The locally stored content is transferred, in whole or in part, to a playback device that allows a user to listen to the content of the playback device. In one embodiment, the user may designate portions of a playback time provided by the playback device to various selections. For example, with a playback device that provides two hours of content, a user may wish to listen to one half hour of news, one half hour of a series and one hour of an book. Thus, the user may partition one quarter of playback time to each of news and the series and one half of the playback time to the book. In one embodiment, the present invention provides different automatic update techniques for the playback device that may be selected by the user based on how the content is to be used. For example, the news portion may be one half hour of the most recent news available from a particular source. The series may be the most recent episode in the series, whether or not the user has listened to other stored episodes. The book portion may provide one hour of the book from the most recent stopping place each time the playback device is coupled to the library retrieval device.